




Speech By
Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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MOTION: REVOCATION OF PROTECTED AREAS

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (8.34 pm): I rise to briefly speak on the revocations proposed, particularly for the Curtain Fig and the Millstream Falls national parks and the Jardine River and the Heathland resources reserves. I am very proud of Tropical North Queensland and its landmarks, particularly in and around the electorate of Barron River. It is a place that is wedged between two remarkable World Heritage areas—the Great Barrier Reef and the World Heritage rainforest.

It is not all white sand and beaches. The Tropical and Far North is blessed to have some of the most beautiful national parks and reserves virtually on our doorstep as well. The value of our national parks is the bedrock of the tourism and ecotourism industry around us. Like other members speaking this evening, I know of many of the areas where these small revocations are going to be.

For me the Curtain Fig National Park is especially unique. It protects the endangered mabi forest and the wildlife that rely on it. It is also home to a very large fig tree, estimated to be over 500 years old. The proposal to revoke what is a very small parcel of land, just 0.37 hectares, to ratify the alignment of Dowling Road reserve with the actual constructed road is a sensible one that preserves native vegetation. Also included in the revocation is alignment of the Millstream Falls National Park day use area road reserve with the actual constructed road and formalise access to the Millstream Falls National Park day use area.

In 1942 the commander-in-chief of the Australian Military Forces, General Sir Thomas Blamey, investigated using the Atherton Tablelands as a base for rehabilitating and training troops as it was close to the battlefields of New Guinea. Over 300 units were based in the Tablelands across about 160 sites. Today the remains of sites found in the Millstream Falls National Park are the most complete. Camp sites, tracks, drains, slabs, trenches, training areas, a flag pole site and parade grounds are clearly evident. I have visited the site myself. For those with connections to the Kokoda campaign, it is a must see location as it is where the mighty 7th Division, the first AIF soldiers to confront the Japanese at Kokoda, returned and rested before being redeployed back to New Guinea.

The training areas on the Tablelands were used continuously until shortly after the war ended in 1945. It was created in 1943 to service armed forces facilities which needed to be located on the site at the time. Rather than using the dedicated road reserve, at the time the military constructed road pavement and infrastructure where they believed it needed to be. The construction of the road occurred entirely within the national park as it is today. Essentially, we need to make this realignment to fix something that occurred back in 1943.

Just as the member for Keppel said, I am very happy to support the proposed revocation for the Jardine River Resources Reserve and the Jardine River National Park, particularly as there is the potential to return so much land back to the traditional owners. The proposed revocation for the Jardine River Resources Reserve will return 6,760 hectares to the traditional owners, enabling them to reconnect with their lands. Part of this revocation will become part of the new jointly managed national park and ensure the area is protected. Joint management teams working together will protect them all. Sometimes that is a bit challenging.

As the environment minister said, these revocations are to correct boundary anomalies, create safer roads for local residents and visitors and hand back land to the rightful custodians. In most cases we end up with more parks as a result. The revocations are very important steps towards ensuring we get the right balance between the protection of our national parks and the need to right a few inconsistencies. There are many benefits to the public through these revocations—improvements to our visitor safety and access to our beautiful parks. The revocations are both sensible and necessary. I support the motion before the House.